



Frequently Asked Questions about Well Drilling Fees

For Well Operators & Homeowners

Water Resources Program

For more information:

Online visit:
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wrhome.html
– click on wells

To leave a recorded message, call
1-800-468-0261.

Dept of Ecology, HQ
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504

Bellingham
Field Office
1204 Railroad Ave, #200
Bellingham WA 98225

Bellevue
Northwest Region Office
3190 – 160th Ave. SE
Bellevue WA 98008
(425) 649-7000

Olympia
Southwest Region Office
PO Box 47775
Olympia WA 98504
(360) 407-6300

Vancouver
Field Office
2108 Grand Blvd.
Vancouver WA 98661
(360) 690-7171

Yakima
Central Region Office
15 W Yakima Ave, #200
Yakima WA 98902
(360) 575-2490

Spokane
Eastern Region Office
N. 4601 Monroe, #202
Spokane WA 99205
(509) 329-3400

Each year, about 6,500 water wells and 8,000 resource protection wells are constructed in Washington, each requiring a fee to be paid by the property owner. These fees are used to administer the state's well construction and licensing program. This includes technical assistance to the public and well operators; administering the state's inspection and continuing education programs; and to award grants to local governments for well inspection activities.

Q: When is a fee required to drill a well in Washington State?

A: The fee is due at the same time the State is given notice. This is at least 72 hours prior to the construction of a well. There is no fee for decommissioning a well or for construction of a geotechnical soil boring, although prior notice is still required. In an emergency, such as a failing well, the department allows verbal notice, but the notification form and fee must be sent to Ecology within 24 hours.

Q: What are the fees for water wells?

A: The fee for water wells with a top casing of less than 12 inches is \$100 per well. If the top casing is 12 inches or greater, the fee is \$200 per well. The fee for construction of dewatering systems is \$40 for each 200 horizontal lineal feet, or portion thereof.

Q: Do I owe another fee if I drill a well, but don't find water?

A: If a first attempt at drilling results in an unusable well, there is no additional fee for a second attempt provided that:

1. The second attempt is made immediately, prior to the drill rig leaving the site, and
2. The unusable well, or dry hole, is properly decommissioned before the driller leaves the site, and
3. Well reports describing all the construction and decommissioning activities are submitted as required.

This regulation is intended to help a property owner if more than one attempt is necessary to find water. However, the unusable well must be decommissioned. This regulation does not apply to follow-up construction work after the drilling



equipment has left the drill site, such as deepening a well or installing more casing. In these instances, a new notice of intent and fee are required.

Q: What are the fees for resource protection and environmental investigation wells?

A: A \$40 fee per well is required with each notice of intent to construct a resource protection well. Also, there is a \$40 fee for up to 4 environmental investigation wells. There is a \$10 fee for every well installed after the initial fee has been paid. Geotechnical soil borings are exempt from fees. See the Notice of Intent for each well for specific instructions on calculating fees.

Sometimes it becomes necessary to construct more resource protection, environmental investigation or geotechnical soil borings, than originally planned. When this happens, an additional notice and fee must be submitted within 24 hours after all wells have been completed, or as soon as the final number of wells to be constructed is determined.

Q: Can I request a refund if my plans change and a well is not drilled?

A: If your plans change, a written request for a refund can be made on a form provided by Ecology. The request must come from the person who submitted the fee. A refund request can be made no later than six months after the department originally received the fee. A copy of the notice of intent receipt should be included, along with the reason why the well was not constructed.